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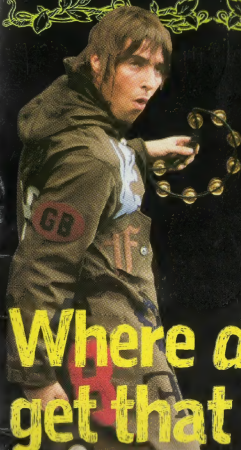
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The Vines

NO WONDER EVERYONE WANTS
TO SHAG CRAIG NICHOLLS!

20 JULY 2002
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WHY 2002 BELONGS TO THE VINES

How falling in love with **Craig Nicholls** will change your life forever

If you go down to the record shop today, you can buy one of the greatest albums you will ever hear. That album is 'Highly Evolved' and it was made by The Vines, a band who have already made a seismic impact on our musical barometer.

Only two years ago, the idea of Glastonbury 2002 being rocked to its foundations by a visceral four-piece rock'n'roll band from the other side of the planet seemed about as likely as England getting through to the World Cup quarter-finals.

Yet the incredible electrical storm summoned up on the Other Stage by The Vines three weeks ago proved that here is a band determined to claim their place in the Rock'n'Roll Hall Of Fame by sheer force of will.

Flashback two years. Youth and excitement were out. Beards and bobble hats were in. For those bands corralled into the, ahem, New Acoustic Movement, the five-step plan to rock superstardom looked a little like this: 1) Crawl out of bed hungover. 2) Reach, bleary-eyed, for acoustic guitar. 3) Remember that three weeks ago your girlfriend dumped you. 4) Mumble thoughts on the matter incoherently into a microphone. 5) Leave recording studio, new single completed. The combined effect was the look and sound of a Nick Hornby novel put to music. When Badly Drawn Boy actually did it for *About A Boy*, you knew that for NAM, the war was over.

In such a dreary climate it was hardly surprising it took a single photo to launch The Strokes. You could almost hear the collective swoon as a nation turned to page 18 of *NME* dated April 21, 2001 and found, in the place of a bunch of tramps nursing soggy roll-ups, five absurdly named dark-eyed princes, ready to administer a Manhattan-transfer-of-cool. That they all had names like Claudio Augustine Garibaldi St Hubbins III was merely a bonus.

In the wake of the dissolute racket of 'Is This It', the floodgates opened. With The White Stripes and The Hives both making successful colour-coded bids to cash in on the newly resurrected belief in rock'n'roll roots manoeuvres, the stakes were raised. A vampiric Black

Rebel Motorcycle Club successfully strapped a coffin-shaped sidecar to the Stripes/Strokes bandwagon with their bad-tempered take on T.Rex, but it was only with the arrival of The Vines in the charts in April (debut single 'Highly Evolved' entered at a cool Number 32) and their static-thrill of a debut that the whole glorious mess acquired a band and an album that will truly stand the test of time.

The Vines, quite simply, feel like a group with the power and potential to... oh, listen. They get you thinking of The Greats. Of Nirvana. Of The Who. Of Swervedriver (that's what Craig reckons, anyhow).

In a scene currently bursting with twig-thin bands in greasy fringes and leather jackets, they are the benchmark. The impeccable Ramsay Street gone grunge image, the retro-active melodies: The Vines have got the lot. And in the wake of the re-installation of rock'n'roll at the top of the cultural barometer, they have the potential to shatter the cultural preconception that an Australian group can't have the whole planet singing their name. They're that exciting. Anyway, it's about time there was a rock'n'roll star in the skies called Craig.

The Strokes have got the looks, the Stripes have got the image, and The Hives, bless 'em, have got the stage show. But right now it's The Vines who've got the tunes. And, as any student in rock history will tell you, that's the only thing that lasts. Besides, who better to surf the zeitgeist than a group familiar with Bondi Beach?

Jason Fox

In a scene bursting with twig-thin bands in greasy fringes and leather jackets, they are the benchmark



IS 'HIGHLY EVOLVED' THE GREATEST DEBUT ALBUM EVER?

The weird thing about the greatest rock'n'roll songs is that any idiot can play them. The Who's 'My Generation', Nirvana's 'Come As You Are', Oasis' 'Live Forever' The Strokes' 'Last Nite'. Three-chord wonders, all of 'em. That, apart from all the other things, is what makes The Vines' debut album – which as we go to press is poised to burst into the Top Ten – feel so much like genius.

It just sounds easy. Craig Nicholls is at the same point in his career as Liam Gallagher was when he sang "Live my life in the city/There's no easy way out" in 'Rock n'Roll Star'. When he sings "I wanna get free/I wanna get free/I wanna ride into the sun!" in 'Get Free', he's falling in line with a chain of command that stretches all the way back via Liam to Kurt, to Morrissey to Johnny Rotten and Iggy back to Marlon Brando's surly anti-everything rebel Johnny

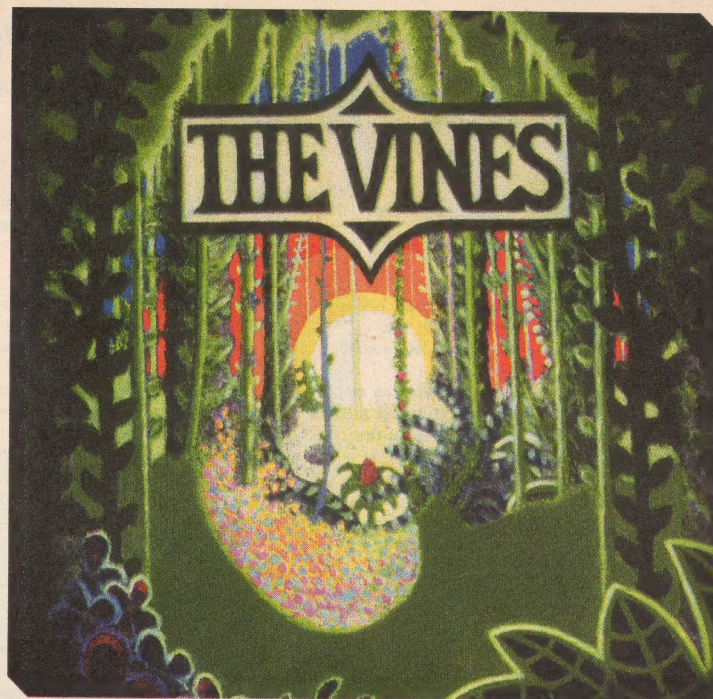
It's grungy and vital and it sticks in your head like chewing gum

in the 1954 movie *The Wild One*. The name of the rival gang in the movie was Black Rebel Motorcycle Club. Spooky.

It's this, as much as anything, that makes you think 'Highly Evolved' might just be a debut to rank with all-time heavies like 'Definitely Maybe', Television's 'Marquee Moon', The Jesus And Mary Chain's 'Psychocandy', even 'The Stone Roses'. It feels, like all the best rock'n'roll, instinctive. Think about writing these kind of songs for longer than five minutes and you're halfway to prog rock. Deconstruct them and you may as well forget about it: you're in 'Amnesiac' territory.

As with all great debuts, it's driven by a need to escape from a restrictive environment. If 'Highly Evolved' is anything to go by, The Vines can't wait to get out of theirs. As Craig sings in 'Outathaway!', "It's driving me insane!" If The Vines crash-landed in heaven, you'd imagine they'd bail straight out. Simply, Craig sounds like the best, snottiest, rock'n'roll brat this century.

Another thing 'Highly Evolved' shares with great debuts past is that The Vines are natural magpies. As Noel Gallagher could tell you, stealing from the best is an art form and on 'Highly Evolved' The Vines manage it without ever getting their lawyers



hot under the collar. The Kinks, Nirvana, Brian Wilson, Supergrass, The Stone Roses... they're all in there somewhere. The result is a record that practically compels you to open the windows and blast it over the rooftops. It's grungy and vital and it sticks in your head like chewing gum.

Equally, it doesn't need a context to sound good. For all the baggage that comes with The Vines' role in the midst of a rock renaissance, it stands up entirely on its own. Slouching, of course. The only cultural antennae you need to get into it are ears.

The other, crueller, thing 'Highly Evolved' does is show up quite what a waste of time some of the other stuff you've been listening to lately is. No offence, but what use is The Hives' 'Your New Favourite Band' when you've got songs with as much variation and attention to detail as 'Get Free' and 'Autumn Shade' to listen to?

Like all the great debuts, 'Highly Evolved' shows no mercy as it raises the bar a notch. Now it's up to everyone else to see if they can jump it.

Jason Fox

THE ACCOLADES

What the papers said about 'Highly Evolved'

The Observer, 7 July 2002

POP CD OF THE WEEK

THE VINES Highly Evolved

Recorded in LA with producer Rob Schnapf (Beck, Foo Fighters), their debut is raw and catchy, filled with pumped-up garage rock and the occasional big ballad. At times singer Craig Nicholls wails like an antipodean Mick Jagger ('Outathaway') while 'Country Yard' contains a plaintive vocal

that wouldn't be out of place on a Coldplay record.

The Times, 6 July 2002



The Vines are bringing much-needed energy to the evolution of pop, says David Sinclair

The Vines
Highly Evolved
★★★★★

Straight out of Australia, with a sound so sexy and sludgy that it makes you want to roll around in it, the Vines have done more than capture the spirit of the day with their debut album, *Highly Evolved* (Heavenly). Like the Ramones with their self-titled debut in 1976, or the Stooges with theirs in 1969, the Vines have done no less than re-define how a bonkers rock'n'roll band is supposed to function. But while those acts stripped guitar music down to its

Heat, 13-19 July 2002

The Vines
Highly Evolved (HEAVENLY)

Highly Evolved manages to combine these influences in such a way that the result is something genuinely

original. From the punk/grunge of title track *Highly Evolved*, *Get Free* and *In The Jungle*, to the luscious 60s psychedelia of *Sunshinin'* and *Country Yard*, each track offers the listener something exciting and vibrant.

Verdict: Thoroughly enjoyable and invigorating, if you're a fan of bands like The Hives and The White Stripes this is an essential buy. ★★★★★ OLIVIA COOKE

Daily Mirror, 28 June 2002

THE VINES: HIGHLY EVOLVED ★★★★★

THE classic act to come out of Australia since Crowded House called it a day. Frontman Craig Nicholls may have a more wayward public image than Neil Finn, but he shares the same astute understanding of pop craft.

Kurt Cobain and Evan Dando are the key influences but Autumn Shade's dreamy psychedelia and the gorgeous Country Yard signal a major talent. Stick around, mate.

Believe the hype

CD

OF THE WEEK

The Vines
Highly Evolved (Heavenly)
★★★★★ £12.99

Bearing in mind the state of turmoil in which it was apparently created, *Highly Evolved* is a remarkably confident record. Like Oasis's debut *Definitely Maybe*, it essentially offers two kinds of song – raw-throated rock stomp and swaying ballad – but pulls off both with enviable panache. The title track and *Outathaway!* are compact and furious, powered along by Nicholls's purging scream. The melodically baseless Autumn Shade and Mary Jane, meanwhile, serve up majestic harmonies, descending piano figures and

lazily strummed acoustic guitars. Unlike Oasis's debut, however, *Highly Evolved* offers hints of an imagination not bound by the limitations of its record collection. Factory, a more polished version of the Vines' first single, is pleasingly difficult to pin down, arriving as it does on a peculiar, looping ska beat. It shouldn't really work, but its breeziness is irresistible.

The Guardian, 5 July 2002

And the one who didn't get it...

THE VINES

22.06.02

The Leadmill, Sheffield

KKK

Aussie upstarts don't quite live up to the hype.

Ultimately, though, the Australians don't have the necessary consistency, descending too often into a much less inspired garage-punk version of pub rock. 'Sunshinin'' is a turgid semi-acoustic trawl, while you can actually sing Coldplay's 'Trouble' over the top of 'Mary Jane'. That The Vines have potential is not in doubt, but they haven't fully realised it yet.

PAUL TRAVERS

Kerrang!, 29 June 2002

Kerrang!, 6 July 2002

THE VINES

Highly Evolved (Heavenly)

KKK

It's almost enough to gloss over your unease that, as though The Vines are at spang other peoples' sounds, they have precious little identity of their own.

The Vines have delivered a pleasing but shallow pop-rock record. Perhaps the same could've been argued of 'Nevermind'. But that album's blast of metallicised bubblegum was sublime: 'Highly Evolved' is too often a dull retread of other peoples' glories, evoking the sound, but never the righteous, electrifying, deathless fury. If we do have to live through a grunge revival, rather than these sunshine-seeking pop kids than the grizzled sonic goans offered by Puddle Of Mudd, Nickelback et al. But we deserve more.

THE VINES: YOUR COMPLETE HISTORY



When The Vines first hit the pages of *NME* last November, they quickly found themselves among rarefied company.

"Following The Strokes and The White Stripes, The Vines are the latest group to offer a thrilling, stripped-down take on the traditional rock'n'roll blueprint," we asserted in their *On* piece. The band had some trouble piecing together their past but *NME* had a surer grasp: **"Their songs are short, sharp and fuzzily melodic and at some point next year they'll be collected together on a classic debut album. For now, that's all they – and you – need to know."**

This much was certainly known: 24-year-old singer Craig Nicholls and bassist Patrick Mathews had met nine years ago while working in a Sydney McDonald's. They started playing together with Patrick's friend, drummer David Olliffe, naming themselves The Vines in tribute to Craig's father's band, The Vynes. After their demos caught the ear of a radio DJ friend, the band joined forces with their management team and the

production company Engine Room, who funded the recording of more demos. One of these found its way to Beck/Elliott Smith/Foo Fighters producer Rob Schnapf, who lost no time in "bugging" the band.

By July 2001, they were in LA to record 'Highly Evolved' with Schnapf. The sessions were famously fraught – two months and eight tracks into the five-month process, Olliffe returned to Australia and Beck associate Joey Waronker was drafted in to help. The band later recruited new drummer Hamish Rosser and a second guitarist called Ryan Griffiths.

And now here they were in the same issue, receiving their first Single Of The Week. **"On the three tracks here ('Factory', 'Drown The Baptists' and, best of all 'Ain't No Room') The Vines are breathing new life into classic stuff and are on the way to making classics themselves,"** we wrote.

In January, we interviewed the band in LA, and were treated to a preview of new tracks.

"As the tape rolls, ghosts of epic Sunset sessions past crane an ear. Mick'n'Keef glimmer approvingly. Led Zep rock'n'roll along. Brian Wilson, you imagine, is smiling from his sandpit. Because the songs that follow, all from The Vines' forthcoming debut album, are quite simply staggering; veering between dreamy, harmony-laden ballads and furious, screaming, garage-grunge thrashes. It's extraordinary stuff."

And this was before anyone had even seen them live. When we did, at their first UK show at the Brighton Freebutt, we were completely blown away. **"Without question, The Vines are going to be this year's Strokes. A few more gigs like tonight and they might even turn out to be a whole lot more."**

Their second Single Of The Week, 'Highly Evolved', maintained the momentum in late-March.

"It's a totally brilliant record, and the genius behind it is Craig Nicholls," we said. **"Considering he's got at least a dozen songs better than this still to come, you've got to imagine that by the end of the year, The Vines are going to be bigger than U2, Gareth Gates and Nickelback combined. We're not joking. This is a record you must own."**

By June, they appeared on the cover for the first

time under the headline 'The Screwed-Up Story Of The Best Band Since Nirvana'. The volatile chemistry of the group, hinted at onstage, became explicitly clear as Craig suffered a panic attack before the band's set at the Coachella festival. **"Our advice is simple: see them soon. You never know. It could be the only chance you get,"** we warned darkly.

One thing that remained stable was the level of excitement: the release of their third single, 'Get Free' meant their third Single Of The Week: **"You know how The Vines are the best thing since amplification? And how their last two singles were almost unbearably excellent? God, look, we know this is getting very hard to believe, even with the subliminal pro-Vines drugs we've been adding to the printing ink, but this one is even better..."**

And with the review of their debut album on June 29, the religious zeal took on a new edge.

"'Highly Evolved' is the sort of shiver-down-the-spine debut that gets you thinking that if The Strokes were the John The Baptists of rock then just maybe... No pressure, mind."

The rest, it seems, has every real chance of being history.

Victoria Segal

"It's the sort of shiver-down-the-spine debut that gets you thinking that if The Strokes were the John The Baptists of rock then just maybe... No pressure, mind"

HE ROCKED OUT EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS

I've known of The Vines for a long time. As a kid Craig used to bash me up at karate, Pat was my mate's brother and we went to the same school.

A gig that stands out in my mind was a few years ago at a businessman's club in Hurstville, Sydney. This club was a small drinking hole, members only, same patrons seven nights a week, 365 days a year. Two of my mates worked there as doormen – one of them was Pat's brother.

Pat's bro' told the club that he could sort out a few bands for a couple of hundred bucks and some cheap beer. I made flyers for the event: 'Saturday night, Hurstville Businessman's Club, \$1 schooners, lingerie waitresses, The Vines!'

The crowd was made up of friends, schoolmates, and regular patrons. When they started playing, you should have seen the faces of the regulars. Craig was flinging himself around, lying on the ground tearing the shit out of his guitar. The director of the club

told me that if Craig didn't chill out he'd throw them out. Then they finished and we all went back to drinking beer."

James Furey

Back in May 2001, I was The Vines' sound engineer at a gig they played at the Enmore Theatre in Sydney, supporting fellow Australian bands You Am I and Eskimo Joe. The gig was one of the few times they played in Sydney prior to heading over to LA last year. Even at this stage though, the vibe on the band was strong with lots of people arriving early to check them out.

The gig itself went well, with the band getting a great response. The Vines were seemingly happy – though quite nervous before and after – no signs of the anti-social behaviour now being reported. I do recall thinking that the drummer was a bit half-arsed and that the real talent of the group lay in songwriter Craig.

Darren Atkinson

I saw The Vines play a support gig at the Newcastle University in NSW Australia about two years ago. The line up was: The Vines, Eskimo Joe and You Am I.

I was told by Eskimo Joe's manager to get to the gig early to see The Vines because "they will

THE DRUMMER'S STORY

David Olliffe was the original drummer for The Vines before quitting last autumn in the middle of sessions for 'Highly Evolved' amid well-reported tensions. He's now waiting to return to university "so I can hopefully make an honest living" and playing with Patrick's brother John in The Red Sun Band.

"Patrick and I met at high school. At the time he was into Guns N'Roses, while my tastes were a little more refined. We found some common ground with the emergence of The Stone Roses. Patrick discovered Craig while working together over the grill at McDonald's. They approached their work with Beck-esque romanticism, singing songs while flipping burgers.

"Craig and Patrick collaborated on the earliest material. Stylistically, those early songs were very similar to the most recent efforts, with a bit of country rock and Beatle-esque pop. It wasn't long, however, before we all submitted to Craig's songwriting authority, which he developed largely in isolation.

"He became adept at committing his ideas to four-track, which helped him develop a keen sense of arrangement. With Craig's rough ideas on tape, we tended to jam out the songs in the rehearsal room. There are numerous 'lost' tracks from the early days, all of which had some merit, including 'Lawman', 'Animal Machine', 'By The Sea' and 'Lancelot Croft'. We played a few covers early on, including Nirvana's 'Been A Son', The Velvet Underground's 'Here She Comes Now', the Kinks' 'Till The End Of The Day' and 'Big Sky', and a vast repertoire of You Am I songs such as 'Berlin Chair' and 'Cathy's Clown'.

"Most of our early gigs were memorable for some kind of disaster. At a friend's party, we performed so badly that we played the set twice. This only made us twice as bad. At another party, the set was

interrupted after one song, when a drunken ruckus erupted in front of the stage. On resumption we only managed two more songs before the amp blew. Then there was the time I fell off the stage at the Sydney Uni Band Comp Final.

"When we signed the deal (with Capitol), everyone was excited, although we thought this was inevitable. Personally, things moved too fast for me, with the pressure affecting my playing and state of mind. Staying in Hollywood, we probably saw the worst of what America has to offer. We spent most of our time in the studio or at the hotel so we didn't see much of what you might call culture. Living for so long with each other's idiosyncrasies, our relationships deteriorated quite a bit, which was unfortunate considering how long we've been friends.

"I can't really listen to the album any more, although I'm happy with most of it. I certainly expected it to be quite different, in terms of song selection and the overall feel. My feelings about the album are too complicated to be articulated effectively in the context of an interview. I'm just trying to move on. I prefer the stuff we recorded in Sydney early in 2001. There are brilliant versions of 'Winning Days', 'Sunchild', 'Mary Jane' and 'Get Free' in the can, which I felt should have been on the album. I just hope that one day people will hear those recordings.

"I haven't spoken to Craig for a long time, so I can't really guess where his head's at. I'd say most of the reports (about his mental state) have been exaggerated for dramatic effect. We always regarded Craig as an eccentric genius, so he's probably equipped to deal with the madness of rock stardom. Being socially awkward (as we all are), Craig best expresses himself through his songs which are a better indication of his state of mind."

Victoria Segal

David Olliffe: "I haven't spoken to Craig for a long time"



THE LABEL THAT DISCOVERED THEM

Illustrious Artists are a Sydney-based label run by Russell Hopkinson, the drummer with You Am I. They released The Vines' debut single 'Hot Leather/Sunchild' last year.

"We were looking for an opening band for a show in Sydney and my mate, Jimmy Roden, said 'there's this great band called The Vines, you should get them because they're like a garage punk band with killer songs'. We got 'em on and they were cool, incredibly raw. They'd never really played a big stage before and they needed someone to help them set up their gear because they didn't really know how, which I thought was great because these days most young bands are so fuckin' professional and bland that you really wish they'd take some drugs or something.

"We got 'em out on tour with You Am I even though they didn't have a record out. They'd never been out of Sydney before. They really didn't have their shit together too much, but there was an energy level that just sucked you in. They sang like angels and drank and smoked like devils, which is the way it should be. They really didn't play around town a lot and they never toured apart from with our band that one time, so a lot of people in Australia haven't seen them yet.

"(After that) I said, 'Please can I make a Vines seven-inch?' and they went, 'Sure!' I sent the masters down to the pressing plant and the chap rings me back and goes, 'I think the master's fucked; the levels are just right up in the red for the whole song'. And I said, 'Perfect, that's exactly how it has to be'.

"Some people might say, 'They're lucky', but I think they had something beyond luck or good timing. When you play 'Sunchild' from the Illustrious Artists 45, the hairs stand up on the neck. That's special and beyond what most bands can achieve in their lifetime. I love the album but I think the next record that's floating around in Craig's head will be better."

Victoria Segal

LIKE A KID IN HIS BEDROOM': FROM THE EARLY DAYS

be the biggest band in the UK within the next two years".

Not many people turned up to see the Vines. I'd say there were 15 people watching and about 20 outside munching on free food. Craig pulled the same rock star moves that night as he does today. He didn't seem to notice people judging him and just rocked out like a kid in his bedroom. He was wearing faded jeans that looked really daggy (I think he's wearing them in the 'Get Free' video) and he was very thin. The other guys looked so scared they were barely moving. I think it was perhaps their second ever gig.

After their set The Vines (excluding Craig, I think) walked through the audience to give out free demos. I missed out but my sister got one which she still has. Ching Ching!

Carly

See The Vines in a small Sydney club? Who are you kidding? The Vines never played clubs over here. They used to play this little pub called The Iron Duke a few times in Sydney but it's rough as guts and you only go there if you're desperate to play anywhere; it's usually for a rougher crowd. They started playing when there were loads of

live venues closing down in the mid-'90s because of slot/pokie machines, so didn't get to play much at all really, and never in the bigger pubs.

Oh, and hey, Craig has played onstage solo before over here. So please stop claiming all the 'firsts' and saying he played solo for the first time in the UK! (had to get that in!) Glad you like our boys, make sure you give them back eventually.

Tommy C

I played in the Sydney University Band Competition final in 2000 against them, they reminded me of Nirvana then, although I haven't heard much of their new music or seen them since. At the time I thought they would go bang. They won the whole thing. Not surprisingly, they seem to fit in with the whole Strokes/White Stripes thing.

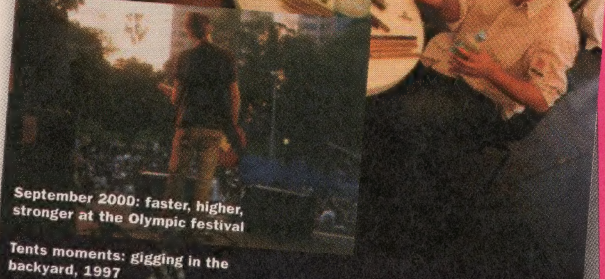
I find it strange that they are so popular with NME seeing as Bush copped a lot of shit for being Nirvana copyists. There are definitely more bands from where they came from. There are a lot of Aussie acts that never get known outside of Australia who could be just as good or even better than The Vines. Perhaps the music industry could take a look into it?

Stu

The first time I saw The Vines was when they were supporting You Am I – one of Australia's most respected and well-loved bands. There were four people watching, including their manager. The first song the band played in the set, 'Autumn Shade', was a slow song. During the solo, Craig got down on his knees to better eke the music out. It was then that my jaw hit the floor and I thought, 'Here is a star in the making.'

The next day, I spent the afternoon chatting with the band for my website as he consumed his dietary intake of pot. I found him – and David and Patrick – to be sweet, lovely guys. They were looking forward to going overseas: recording their album with a guy who had worked on an Elliott Smith record was a very big deal. They were naive, sure, but there was something utterly charming about their eyes-wide-open view of things, but there was a definite sense that they had their heads screwed on right. 'Highly Evolved' is proof positive that The Vines' hard work, enthusiasm and love for what they do has more than definitely paid off.

Andrew Weaver



ANATOMY OF A ROCK GOD

You don't have to have good hair, a wonky tooth and half-closed eyes to write earth-shaking rock music... but it helps, especially when you're Craig Nicholls and the future of pop is in your hands. Where does it all come from? Elvis, Michael Jackson, Celine Dion and a cast of thousands, since you ask...

BRAIN

"It's 1969 in my head..." In terms of chart Number Ones, this equates to a combination of Fleetwood Mac's 'Albatross', Marvin Gaye's 'Heard It Through The Grapevine', The Rolling Stones' 'Honky Tonk Women' and – of course! – 'Two Little Boys' by fellow Australian, Rolf Harris. "There's maybe a tiny percentage madness that belongs to me," he recently told *NME*. "but it's not necessarily madness. I feel blessed rather than possessed." Just like Rolf!

GOOD SKIN

As we know from docusoaps like *Home & Away* and *Neighbours*, nobody from Australia has ever suffered from acne. In fact, only two proper pop stars have ever had bad skin. They are Jason Orange, not a real orange, from Take That, and Cathy Dennis, woman behind such era-defining lyrics as "La la la, la la la la la". This means that all other musicians – which is quite a few – have had good skin. Like Craig. With odds like that, who can be surprised that The Vines are bloody ace?

WONKY TOOTH

David Bowie pioneered dodgy dentistry in pop, and Craig is more than capable of picking up Dave's tooth-shaped gauntlet. Celine Dion had extremely crap teeth, but got them seen to, which is cheating and fake, just like Ms Dion herself.

SLIGHTLY UNDONE FLIES

What lies behind is a mystery, though press reports obviously suggest that The Vines are big down under. In teasing us with matters sexual, Craig takes us back to the very dawn of pop itself, and Bill Haley And His Comets, whose 'Shake Rattle & Roll' was described as 'rock and roll'. Until that point, 'rock and roll' had simply been slang for rumpo.

LEGS, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DOING SCISSOR-KICKS

Other pop stars to have had legs include Michael Jackson, Madonna and Prince, putting Craig in good company. Craig's legs also come in handy for kung-fu kicking bandmate Patrick Mathews in the chest when things don't go according to plan on TV shows.

HAIR

Craig not only has the best hair in The Vines, he also has the most exciting hair of 2002. In addition to this it provides the opportunity for "Is his hair supposed to look like that?"-type comments from parents during *Top Of The Pops*. Being able to provoke such remarks is the benchmark of all landmark pop artists. (See also Boy George.)

FACE IN GENERAL

"She doesn't love me/She doesn't love me/Why should anyone?" ponders Craig in 'Get Free'. Let's start with the fact that Craig's face is – in the words of one excitable internet messageboard poster – "perfect, even if just for sitting on". Recently described in these very pages as a dead ringer for a young Liz Hurley.

DROOPING EYELIDS

Never far away from a bong and with a prodigious weed intake, no wonder Craig reckons leaving the stage "is like coming off a space ship". "Everything," bandmate Patrick has said of these goings-on, "is easier when you're half asleep." So of course Craig continues the grand tradition of epic rock stoners like Shaun Ryder and The Beatles... and Myleene from Hear'Say. Whose mum's name is Bong.

VOICEBOX IN NOT QUITE FULL WORKING ORDER

People who can sing properly and who don't sound like their throat is about to fall off? Put 'em on *Songs Of Praise*! Round here we like people who struggle a bit, putting Craig on a par with other challengingly-voiced turns like Johnny Rotten, Kurt Cobain, Iggy Pop and, er, Ian Brown. "I don't want my voice to run out," Craig has been heard to say. Solution: handcuff it to the radiator.

NICE WATCH

All great rock frontmen know what time it is, the most famous being Public Enemy's Flavor Flav, but his watch didn't come on a nice green leather strap like Craig's.

DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

Only a twat would dispute the fact that Craig's digestive system is in tip-top condition, processing approximately 12 McDonald's burgers per day (quantity of McFlurries TBC) without one trace of junk food creeping into his complexion (see *Good Skin*). Craig has inherited his love of burgers from Elvis Presley. (NB: when on tour in America, Craig can use www.vicinity.com/mcdonalds to predict the quickest route to the nearest branch of his favourite restaurant from any given location.)



CRAIG NICHOLLS: THE VOICE OF A GENERATION

It's sometimes said that every generation gets the music it deserves. Well, if that's the case, we must have been saving up a mountain of brownie points in Rock Valhalla. Not every era is lucky enough to inherit its own icon but we've just got Craig Nicholls.

Nicholls is born of the same gene pool that spawned all the past greats – Jim Morrison, John Lydon, Morrissey, Kurt Cobain, Liam Gallagher et al. These are artists who, by some Faustian deal, rose up above the pack to mean something to their generations beyond the ephemeral appeal of stardom.

Sure, they soundtracked the lives of their contemporary audiences, but they went that mercurial dimension further; they both created and totally embodied the zeitgeist. Theirs was the gift to determine (or at least discover and express better than anyone else) the mood of the times.

In this they are 'typical' – they feel like we do, see what we see, hurt like we do and communicate all of that with a passion and clarity that we instinctively respond to.

But they are also 'beyond' us. They inhabit their own netherworlds and merely pass through the realm of our existence, largely untouched and untouchable. They make and break their own rules, they march to the sound of their own drums and they don't give a fuck what anyone else thinks.

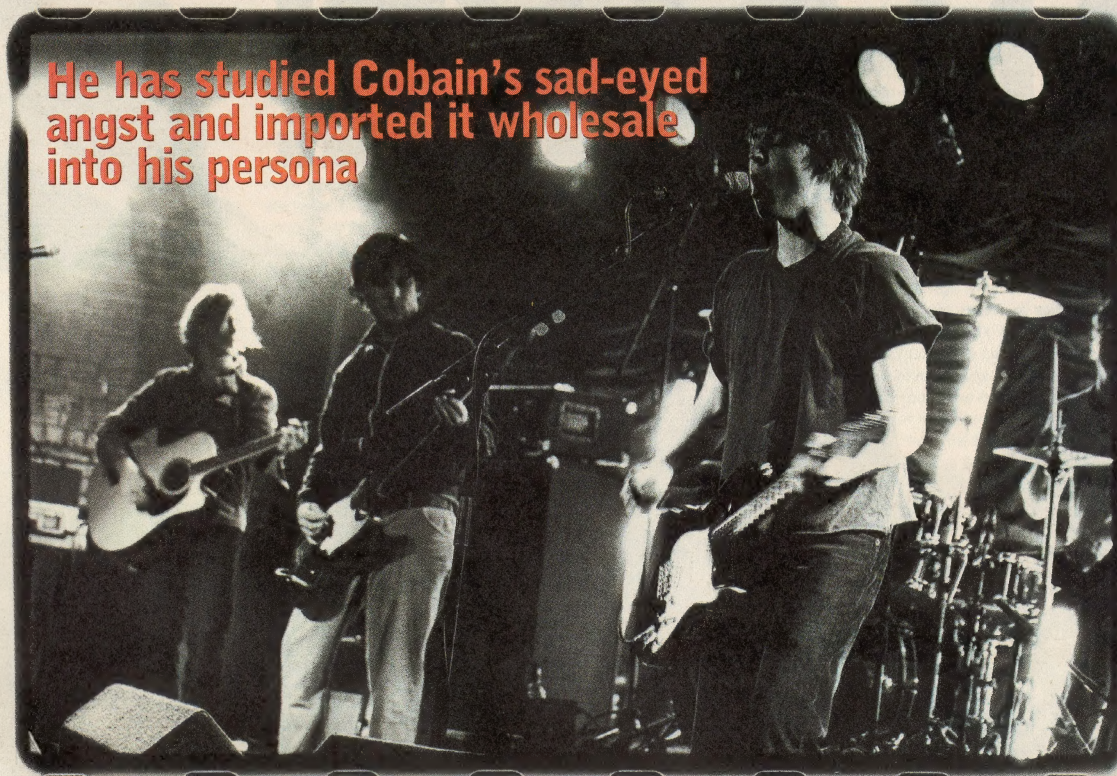
They are prone to martyrdom – indeed, they are gagging for it. Their art is a precarious balance between creativity and desolation, beauty and chaos. Their self-destructive urges are the greatest revenge upon a society that would sell its own soul to get what they've got.

Nicholls fits the bill perfectly. Let's tick some boxes:

He has something of Jim Morrison's wasted cool. In other words, he is stoned. Immaculate.

His spastic anger onstage calls to mind the anarchy at Lydon's command.

He has studied Cobain's sad-eyed angst and imported it wholesale into his persona



He is frail, beautiful and attractive to both sexes, as Morrissey was, only less self-consciously than the Moz.

He has studied Cobain's sad-eyed angst and imported it wholesale into his persona. The tension between light and dark in his songs is pure Nirvana.

There is something about the way he drifts the day in a world of his own that is a less-assertive equivalent of Liam Gallagher's Britpop fuck-you swagger. It fits 2002 like a glove.

We live in a time when our insecurities bind us together in a desperate, collective hug. Craig Nicholls is 24. He smokes a lot of dope, stays in a lot, skateboards when he does go out and only eats fast food. He is an escapist

and a loner who is capable of elevating his psychosis into an experience that speaks for us all. He doesn't care about you or me or the things that make our lives bland or hard. But he wants to be loved. He exists entirely in and through his music and it is so beautiful that it sets him – and us – free.

And as he soars above and beyond his contemporaries, we will share, vicariously, his every triumph. He will do things we only dare dream of doing. He will taste of the ambrosia of immortality. And we will adore him for it.

Until the day we kill him.

Steve Sutherland

WHAT IT'S LIKE WITH THE VINES IN THE STUDIO

The Vines travelled to LA last July to work with Beck/Foo Fighters producer Rob Schnapf. Here Schnapf discusses his time with the band.

"I had a CD that had four or five songs on and listened to it over and over again. I liked that it was both melodic and snotty – it had attitude but it was very exciting and visceral. I started bugging the record company guy in Australia – I just filled up a page of email with 'The Vines!' instead of trying to explain with words. That was over a year before I started to work with them. They weren't ready to do anything yet – I would just periodically bug them.

"I didn't meet them until the night before we were due to start. That's not ideal but Australia's very far away...

"With Craig, we sort of opened the barn door and he had this flood of ideas and we let it happen. I didn't have problem working with him. He loves recording and when he's doing what he loves he's happy. From early on, we had good results.

"The tension? Oh, it was there (laughs). But there were little victories. 'Country Yard' was one, they didn't want to do that song;

I don't think they really knew it was good. What else? Well, Craig likes McDonald's. (Laughs) And Patrick's not a bad ten-pin bowler. He's very good. We would have Team Australia versus Team USA battles and he'd weigh in heavily."

Victoria Segal



WHAT WILL THE SECOND ALBUM SOUND LIKE?

HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE

"I met Liam Gallagher at Coachella. He said, 'Eard your band's cool, man.' Then he started raving about fuck knows what"

Patrick Mathews, Vines bassist

"Absolutely fucking amazing"

James Dean Bradfield, Bristol, March

"The Vines are more sassy (than The Strokes). It's more savage. It's a little more passionate, and raw and raspy"

Jacoby Shaddix, Papa Roach

"I'm stealing the album – I've heard some good things about them. I'm going to listen to them the next time I'm on a boat"

David Bowie

"I think the hottest guy right now is the singer of this Australian band called The Vines. He's smelly. I go for the smelly ones"

Kelly Osbourne



Traffic might stop every time The Strokes finish a new song, but for The Vines it's no big deal. Even before they put out their UK debut seven-inch on Rex Records in October last year there was a demo doing the rounds that had over 40 songs on it – and Craig has kept writing ever since. If anything, he's almost too prolific and his constant desire to record has led to problems.

When NME interviewed him at the Coachella Festival in Palm Springs, the sole reason he flipped out was because he thought Capitol – his American record company – were blocking him from going back into the studio to record the second album (he'd only just finished the first). "I've just got so many songs going around in my head", he confided then, "I'm frightened I'll forget them."

Craig's obsession with recording is well-documented. He claims that he's happiest in a studio and he's already mapped out how the second Vines record will sound. At Coachella he told us he'd become interested in electronica (he's a big fan of

Depeche Mode) and that the next time he was in the studio he wanted to layer his songs with sheets of ambient sound. He was also insistent that the album would be recorded in Australia over four months. The only doubts seemed to be over who was going to produce and which tracks would be on it.

From what NME can gather having heard various demos and studio recordings, album two will contain a similar mix to the first, an even split between abrasive garage rockers and Craig's more reflective country songs. At this stage, the ones to look out for are the two tracks they've just started to perform live (the raucous 'Fuck The World' and 'Ride') and the brilliant 'Winning Days'. The latter is a beautifully melodic psychedelic country song that didn't make it on to 'Highly Evolved', but is widely considered to be the best thing Craig's written to date.

Other tracks currently being considered include the sparse, darkly-lit 'Autumn Shade 2' (key lyric: "I am beginning to need all I can't have/I'm beginning to speak like I'm fucking mad"), an old song 'She's Got Something', as well as two songs that have already appeared in demo form on B-sides – 'Drown The Baptists' and 'Sunchild'. Sources close to the band say that there are a handful of new songs jostling for space too. Whatever, there's certainly no question of any difficult second album syndrome. As Craig concluded at Coachella: "I always thought the whole idea with music and bands was to go forward and progress. We really want to do that in the studio. I want to harmonise my voice a lot, work on my songwriting and for the albums to get better and better. I feel really positive about it. It's going to be a fun time..."

James Oldham

GET YOUR CLICKS HERE!
HEAR 'HIGHLY EVOLVED' IN FULL ON THE NME.COM
LISTENING POST THIS WEEK

THE FUTURE'S BRIGHT...

Although there's no doubt that The Vines will be spending increasing amounts of time in the USA – they're currently in the middle of an extensive American tour which will include an appearance on *Late Night With David Letterman* on August 19 – they're returning to the UK for the Reading/Leeds festivals (August 23-25). There will be further British dates around the time of their next single – probably 'Outthawaway!' – in late September. There's also good news for fans of their cover of OutKast's 'Ms Jackson' – it's promised that a full band version will be released at some point in the near future, possibly the single after next. Then it's back to America for more touring and endless speculation about that imminent second album...

Are Radio 1 snubbing The Vines?

IF SO, PERHAPS YOU'D LIKE TO TELL THE NATION'S FAVOURITE THE ERROR OF THEIR WAYS...

They've had two Top 40 singles, have appeared on *Top Of The Pops* and *CD:UK* and now boast a hit album with their debut, 'Highly Evolved'.

Strangely, though, **The Vines** still can't get on the Radio 1 playlist.

While bands such as The Strokes and The Hives have made it on to the schedule – seen as an important sign of a band's popularity, a crucial step to cementing their future success and a guarantee of several daytime plays a week – The Vines have so far missed out. 'Highly Evolved' and 'Get Free' have been played on specialist shows like Steve Lamacq's *Evening Session*, while Jo Whiley and Mark Radcliffe have been allowed 'free plays' of The Vines on their daytime shows, but both singles were rejected by the panel that presides every week over the choice of the playlist. The reason rumoured, although no-one at Radio 1 will comment, is that the panel found the singles "too hard".

Robin Turner, A&R man at the band's label Heavenly, told *NME*: "I think the speed it all went off was quite shocking to all of us. We delivered two really hard records to Radio 1 in 'Highly Evolved' and 'Get Free' and they just weren't playlisted. Luckily Steve Lamacq has been incredibly supportive."

He added: "Radio 1 have made positive noises about the band's next, 'Outtathaway!', and I'm

hoping for the playlist 'cos when it gets on there, I think that's when it will go massive."

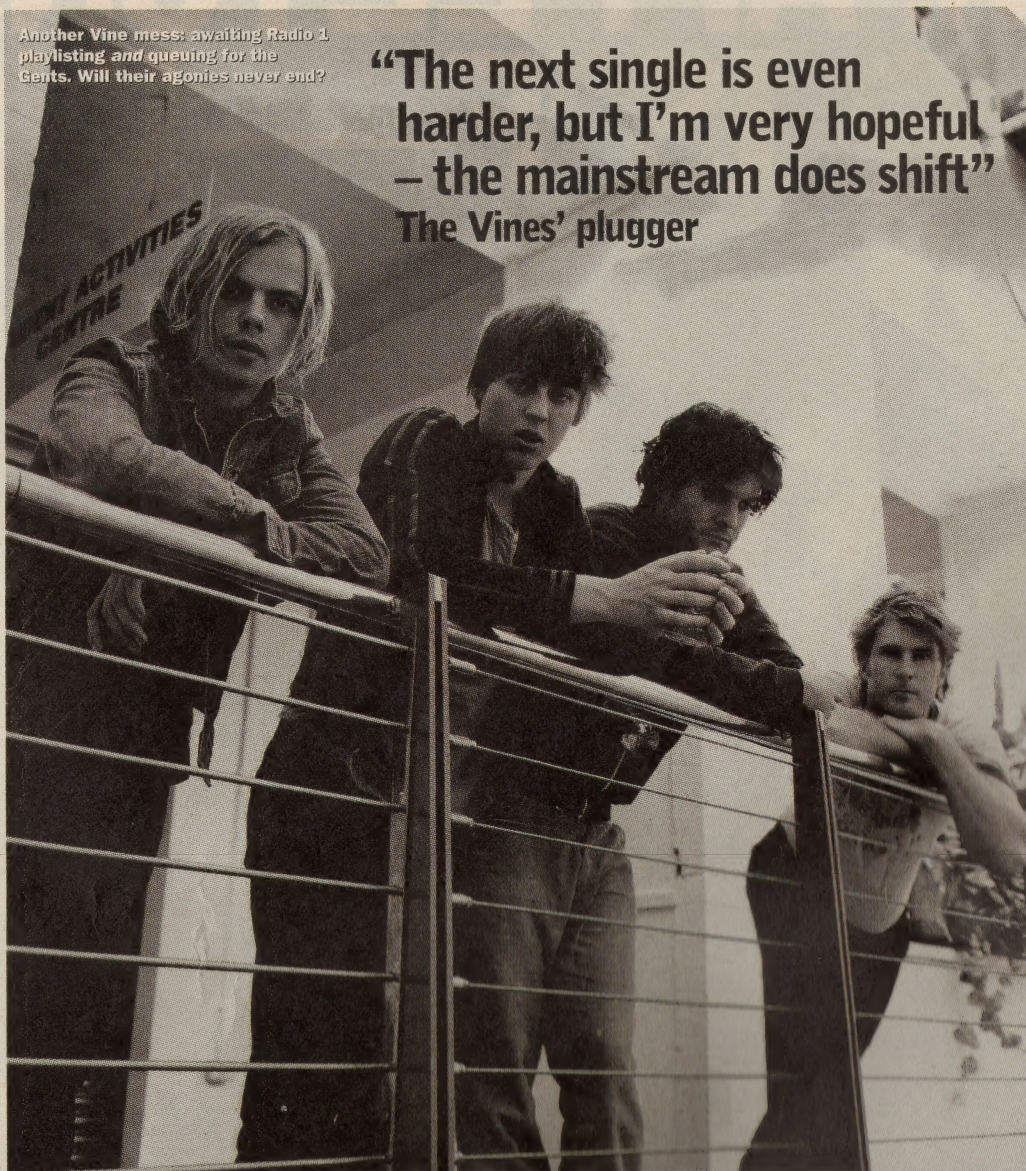
The Vines' radio plugger at EMI, Tina Skinner, told *NME*: "We have had a lot of support from Radio 1. The irony is that the next single is even harder, but the mainstream does shift. I hope 'Outtathaway!' makes the playlist – I'm very hopeful. It would be fantastic. I do know there is a view out there that The Vines have been snubbed by Radio 1, but I know Alex Jones-Donnelly (*Radio 1* playlist *supremo*) has been very receptive to the band."

Sarita Jagpal, Radio 1's music executive, told *NME*: "The Vines are a new and exciting band, they are being supported by Radio 1 and will continue to be supported. Lamacq has been championing them and they have been getting daytime play. We debate all the records that come up for the playlist. It's just a matter of when it's the right time to make the crossover to the playlist."

Jagpal added that listeners' demands for singles to be played would be taken into account if a song is not on the playlist. "We always take into consideration the emails and comments on the messageboard," she told *NME*.

So if you want 'Outtathaway!' on daytime Radio 1, feel free to phone 08700 100 100, text them on 07764 100 100 or email at (DJ's first name).(DJ's surname)@bbc.co.uk.

Another Vine mess: awaiting Radio 1 playlisting and queuing for the Gents. Will their agonies never end?



"The next single is even harder, but I'm very hopeful – the mainstream does shift"
The Vines' plugger

UK TOP 40 SINGLES

THE OFFICIAL UK SINGLES CHART

- 1 **ANYONE OF US (STUPID MISTAKE)**
GARETH GATES (S)
- 2 **A LITTLE LESS CONVERSATION**
ELVIS VS JXL (RCA)
- 3 **THE LOGICAL SONG**
SCOOTER (SHEFFIELD TUNES)
- 4 **I'M GONNA BE ALRIGHT**
JENNIFER LOPEZ (EPIC)
- 5 **BY THE WAY RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS**
(WARNER BROS)
- 6 **WHEREVER YOU WILL GO**
CALLING (RCA)
- 7 **HOT IN HERRE NELLY** (UNIVERSAL)
- 8 **WHEN YOU LOOK AT ME**
CHRISTINA MILIAN (DEF SOUL)
- 9 **HERO** CHAD KROEGER FT JOSEY SCOTT
(ROADRUNNER)
- 10 **FOOLISH ASHANTI**
(MURDER INC/MERCURY)
- 11 **WITHOUT ME** EMINEM (INTERSCOPE)
- 12 **HERE I AM** BRYAN ADAMS (AM)
- 13 **BABY'S GOT A TEMPER**
PRODIGY (XL RECORDINGS)
- 14 **JUST A LITTLE LIBERTY X (V2)**
- 15 **TELL IT TO MY HEART** KELLY
LLORENA (ALL AROUND THE WORLD)
- 16 **JUST A LITTLE GIRL** AMY STUDD
(POLYDOR)
- 17 **STOP CRYING YOUR HEART OUT**
OASIS (BIG BROTHER)
- 18 **IF TOMORROW NEVER COMES**
RONAN KEATING (POLYDOR)
- 19 **MOVE IT LIKE THIS**
BAHA MEN (EMI/S-CURVE)
- 20 **GET OVER YOU/MOVE THIS**
MOUNTAIN SOPHIE ELLIS-BEXTON
(POLYDOR)
- 21 **IT JUST WOHN'T DO** TIM DELUXE FT SAM
OBERNIK (UNDERWATER)
- 22 **ROLL ON/THIS IS HOW WE DO IT**
MIS-TEEQ (INFERNO/TELSTAR)
- 23 **STRANGE RELATIONSHIP**
DARRIN HAYES (COLUMBIA)
- 24 **FOREVER DEE DEE** (INCENTIVE)
- 25 **TWO WRONGS** WYCLEF JEAN FT
CLAUDETTE ORTIZ (COLUMBIA)
- 26 **IT'S OK** ATOMIC KITTEN (INNOCENT)
- 27 **LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT**
KYLIE MINOGUE (PARLOPHONE)
- 28 **AMERICAN ENGLISH**
IDLEWILD (PARLOPHONE)
- 29 **ESCAPE**
ENRIQUE IGLESIAS (INTERSCOPE)
- 30 **LIGHT MY FIRE** WILL YOUNG (S)
- 31 **FLOBBADANCE** BILL & BEN
(BBC MUSIC)
- 32 **NEED KISS** HOLLY VALANCE (LONDON)
- 33 **LK (CAROLINA CAROL BELA)**
DJ MARKIE & XRS FT STAMINA MC
(V RECORDINGS)
- 34 **DJ H & CLAIRE** (WEA)
- 35 **FULL MOON** BRANDY (ATLANTIC)
- 36 **BOP BOP BABY** WESTLIFE (S)
- 37 **BLURRY** PUDDLE OF MUDD (Geffen)
- 38 **EMERGE** FISCHERSPOONER
(MINISTRY OF SOUND)
- 39 **SOMETHING INSIDE (SO STRONG)**
RIK WALLER (LIBERTY)
- 40 **RECKLESS GIRL** BEGINERZ (CHEEKY)

UK TOP 40 ALBUMS

THE OFFICIAL UK ALBUMS CHART

- 1 **HEATHEN CHEMISTRY** OASIS
(BIG BROTHER)
- 2 **BY THE WAY**

WWWWHAT'S ON... **NME.COM**

THE VINES

It's called 'Highly Evolved', it is their debut album, it has been wedged into the **NME** stereo for months on end and it's finally in the shops. Luckily for you, **NME.COM** is very pleased to be hosting the first full listen to what is undoubtedly one of the albums of the year. Hear it in full from midday, July 17.

FESTIVALS UPDATE

Summer? Did someone forget to order sun this year? Bastards. Not that it's stopped us so far... **HOMELANDS, OZZFEST, GLASTO, ROSKILDE.**

It can rain for the rest of July and all of August for all we care, we'll still be out there laughing our arses off. Check out our Festivals microsite for details of the fun still to come microsites.nme.com/festivals2002

DON'T FORGET...

It's now only 160 days until Xmas. The time to order the turkey and decorate the tree is not quite upon us, when it is you'll be the first to know.

